

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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AGR-20 TRSE-00 NIC-01 DRC-01 /162 W

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FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1648

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJECT: SAG BANS FOUR TRADE UNION OFFICIALS

1. SAG STRUCK HARD AT NASCENT AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS IN NATAL ON FEBRUARY 1 BY BANNING AND SUBJECTING TO HOUSE ARREST FOUR YOUNG WHITES WHO HAD PLAYED LEADING ROLE IN THEIR FORMATION. FOUR, AGED 20 TO 28, WERE: HALTON CHEADLE, ACTING SECRETARY AND ORGANIZER (AFRICAN) NATIONAL UNION TEXTILE WORKERS; DAVID HEMSON, RESEARCH OFFICER TEXTILE WORKERS' UNION OF SA; DAVID DAVIS, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER GENERAL FACTORY WORKERS BENEFIT FUND; AND JEANETTE CUNNINGHAM-BROWN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY TEXTILE WORKERS' UNION.

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2. FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE WERE KEY ASSISTANTS OF MRS. HARRIET

BOLTON, DYNAMIC SECRETARY OF NATAL GARMENT WORKERS UNION WHOSE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE BLACK WORKERS IN NATAL WERE BEGINNING TO BEAR FRUIT IN RECENT MONTHS, AS INDICATED IN VARIOUS CONGEN REPORTS (A-1, 3, 8, 9). TWO OF THEM (GKCHEADLE AND HEMSON) PLAYED PROMINENT ROLE IN BRINGING PEACEFUL END TO RECENT MASSIVE TEXTILE STRIKE (DURBAN 25 AND PREVIOUS). IN VIEW OF THEIR ORGANIZING EFFORTS AMONG AFRICAN WORKERS, THEIR BANNING COMES AS NO SURPRISE; ONLY REAL SURPRISE IS THAT HARRIET BOLTON HAS THUS FAR ESCAPED BANNING.

THIS MAY POSSIBLY STEM FROM HER MEMBERSHIP TUCSA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND HER INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONTACTS. (SUNDAY TRIBUNE REPORTS ICFTU CONSIDERING CALLING WORLD BOYCOTT OF SA GOODS AS RESULT BANNINGS).

3. BANNINGS HAVE BROUGHT OUTCRY FROM LOCAL PRESS, LIBERAL ESTABLISHMENT AND TRADE UNION CIRCLES. BARNEY DLADLA, KWAZULU EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, WHO IS INCREASINGLY INVOLVED IN AFRICAN TRADE UNION MATTERS, SAID "WHOLE THING STINKS TO HIGH HEAVEN...NOT AIMED AT SUPPRESSION

COMMUNISM BUT AT DESTROYING PROGRESS OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS". BOLTON TERMED BANNINGS "DESTRUCTIVE AND VICIOUS ACT" WHICH WOULD ONLY SERVE REMOVE VOICES OF MODERATION FROM ANGRY AFRICAN LABOR SCENE. NORMALLY STABLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY NATAL, OF WHICH HEMSON, DAVIS AND CHEADLE ARE RECENT GRADUATES, HAS CALLED PROTEST MEETING.

4. COMMENT: BANNINGS WILL CLEARLY HAMPER AFRICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN NATAL. NEVERTHELESS, HARRIET BOLTON HAS INDICATED PRIVATELY HER CONVICTION THAT MOVEMENT IS ALREADY TOO FAR ADVANCED TO BE STOPPED BY SUCH MEASURES AND THAT AFRICAN WORKERS THEMSELVES, WITH SUPPORT KWAZULU GOVT, WILL INCREASINGLY INSIST ON BEING REPRESENTED BY INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS UNDER THEIR OWN CONTROL.
HOLMES

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